

Message Text

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22

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 CU-02 /071 W

----- 006990

R 231558Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1428

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, TS

SUBJECT: TUNIS UNIVERSITY: POLICE IN CONTROL

REF: TUNIS 0298

1. MAJOR ELEMENTS OF TUNIS UNIVERSITY HAVE RESUMED CLASSES ALTHOUGH STUDENT ABSENTEEISM REMAINS SIGNIFICANT. SOME STUDENTS DESCRIBE THIS ABSENTEEISM AS A CONTINUING STRIKE, BUT THERE ARE UNDOUBTEDLY MANY WHO DO NOT YET FEEL IT WISE TO RETURN TO CLASSES NOW UNDER STRICT POLICE CONTROL. AS HAS OCCASIONALLY HAPPENED AT TUNIS UNIVERSITY, DEANS OF VARIOUS SCHOOLS, WITH THE APPROVAL OF A MAJORITY OF FACULTY MEMBERS, HAD REQUESTED OR ACQUIESCED IN ASSIGNMENT OF POLICEMENT IN GUISE OF UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEES TO KEEP ORDER WITHIN THE SCHOOLS CONCERNED. THIS IS DEEPLY RESENTED BY A MINORITY OF BOTH FACULTY AND STUDENTS, AND IT INEVITABLY GIVES RISE TO MINOR INCIDENTS BETWEEN STUDENTS AND POLICE.

2. FACULTY OF LETTERS, WHERE THIS YEAR'S TROUBLES

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STARTED IN DECEMBER, HAS ORDERED ALL TEACHERS TO BE

PRESENT AND TO CONDUCT CLASSES IF ANY STUDENTS COME.
THIS ENABLES THE DEAN TO CLAIM THAT STUDIES HAVE RESUMED
AND TO CREDIT THE PRESENCE OF POLICE WITH ENABLING
WILLING STUDENTS AND TEACHERS TO DO THEIR WORK.
DEAN CLAIMED CLASS ATTENDANCE AS OF JANUARY 22
AT 70-100 PERCENT BUT EMBASSY SOURCES AMONG TEACHERS CLAIM
ABOUT 50 PERCENT ATTENDANCE. MINISTRY OF EDUCATION HAS ANNOUNCED
THAT STUDENTS ABSENT THREE TIMES WITHOUT AN EXCUSE WILL
NOT BE ALLOWED TO TAKE EXAMINATIONS OR WILL BE DELAYED
IN DOING SO.

3. RUMORS OF POLICE BRUTALITY AND STUDENT CASUALTIES
ARE WIDESPREAD AND UNDOUBTEDLY EXAGGERATED.

4. DEGREE OF OFFICIAL GOT CONCERN WITH SITUATION IS
HINGED AT BY PRESS REPORTS THAT PRIME MINISTER HAS
MET WITH PRESIDENT ON SUBJECT FOR SECOND TIME IN
10 DAYS, DESTOURIAN PARTY POLITICAL BUREAU HAS DISCUSSED
IT, AND THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS REPORTEDLY REVIEWED
THE SUBJECT JANUARY 22.

5. COMMENT: THERE IS NOTHING UNPRECEDENTED IN STUDENT
SITUATION THIS YEAR SO FAR. PRESENCE OF POLICE WITHIN
CLASS BUILDINGS IS CONTENTIOUS SUBJECT BUT, FROM STANDPOINT
OF GOT DESIRE TO AVOID CLOSING DOWN THE UNIVERSITY, THIS
TACTIC SEEMS THE LESSER OF AVAILABLE EVILS.
SEELYE

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